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POEMS.

— IN TWO VOLUMES. —

J. M. STEARNS.

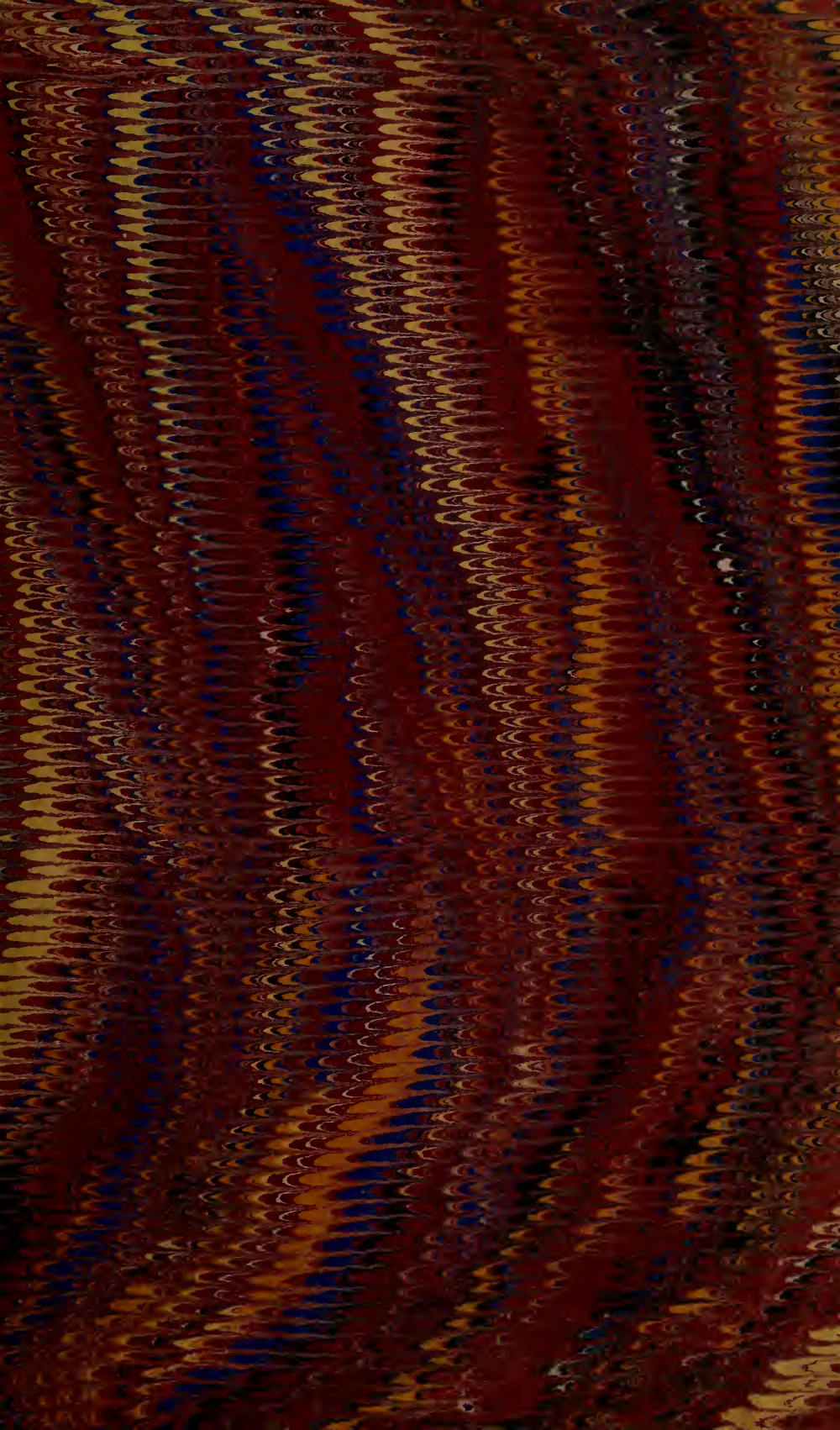


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THE
EAGLE'S FLIGHT

—AND—

OTHER POEMS

—BY—

JOHN M. STEARNS



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TO MY BELOVED MOTHER,
MARIE KISSAM STEARNS,

who has aided and encouraged me
through many years of sickness and ill
health, and who was always the first
person to hear read the poems in this
volume after they were composed, this
book is affectionately dedicated.

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THE EAGLE'S FLIGHT.

On highest mountain top I stood,
And marked an eagle rise,
The broad spread of his mighty wings,
His concentrated eyes.

His line of flight I followed,
From the place whence it begun,
Till his mounting circles' narrowing sweep
Was lost in blaze of sun.

And I cried aloud, "O my country,
"Symbolic this of thee,
"As the eagle's flight is lost in light,
"Such be thy destiny!"

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS.¹

"Read me the riddle of the Bridge,"
I said to my soul,
As beneath it we floated upon the slow tide,
With its palace bright and prison dark,
That watch on either side."

“Read you the riddle of the Bridge,”
My soul said to me,
As we floated away beneath the dark skies,
“Why the Palace is Youth, the Prison is
Age,
And Life’s the Bridge of Sighs.”

¹The celebrated Bridge in Venice, that led from the
Palace to the National Prison.

NAPOLEON.

How strangely incongruous it looks,
In these modern times and lands,
The bronze bust of the Emperor
That on my mantel stands.

There is no crown upon his head,
’Twould seem almost out of place
To set a human ornament
On such a brow and face.

Our petty minds can scarcely hold,
What we around us see,
The whole great world revolved in his,
Like some divinity.

And now from the noisy street below,
The newsboys cry in the rain,
“Extra, the French are beaten,
The Germans win again.”

And while their unwelcome voices,
My mind within me frets,
Someone on the piano next door
Is playing “The Violets”:¹

And I gaze on the cold bronze features,
That ruled so many lands;
And I wonder if his eagle soul
Still sees or understands.

That France doth ride with broken lance,
And the edge of her sword is turned;
But the bust of bronze remained unchanged,
And nothing from it I learned.

¹The violet was the floral emblem of the Bonaparte family.

LIGHTS ON THE GANGES.¹

As from the beginning of time,
’Fore even the Vedas² old,
Still on his sacred course
The sacred river rolled.

And thousands crowded 'long his stream,
For those who therein bathed,
Knew well their souls thus freed from sin,
Would pass to Heaven unscathed.

But though diseases of the soul
Yield to the River's cure,
He cannot ward starvation's pangs
From the children of the poor.

So the mother embarks her little babe
On a piece of plank, with a light,
And sets it adrift on the watery waste,
To float to the sea, through the night.

O! cruelest Fate that thus can rend
The ties of love apart,
And tear from mother's bosom,
The tiny infant heart.

But though the light of Hope still burns
Within the mother's breast,
And Fancy whispers "God will save,
The child will yet be blessed,"

The man who yonder marks the light,
On the waters floating free,
Knows well a life from earth is gone,
A soul floats out to sea.

O Lights of the Sacred River!
Thy wrong is of days of old,
But let us learn thy lesson,
Before the mind grows cold.

Do those who dwell in modern world.
By civilization's stream,
N'e'er behold on its fleeting surface,
Of lights, the fatal gleam.

That tell to those along the shore,
Who view them carelessly,
That lives are lost through human wrong,
And souls float out to sea.

¹Ganges: The sacred river of the Hindoos on which the poor used to expose their little children as described in the poem, having no food for them.

²The Vedas: The sacred books of the Hindoos, which they claim were handed down from Heaven shortly after the creation.

"YOU MUST NOT TREAD ON ME."¹

I love the Stars and Stripes,
The whole flag through and through,
But yet I love that older flag,
We first gave to the blue.

The dangerous serpent darkly coiled,
That foes do shrink to see,
The noble motto which warning gave
"You must not tread on me."

No bluster there, or arrogance,
But America's word is said,—
"We trample not on others,
And on us you must not tread."

And, though, we are with peace content,
And seek no wars or strife,
Nor aim by conquest to enlarge
Our bounds of national life;

If any should, with wrongful step,
Upon our rights intrude,
Let them take warning from that flag,
We'll give them greeting rude.

And should they dare with hostile mind,
To once abide our breath,
They'll find within its compass
The blow of certain death.

Yes, always with the Stars and Stripes,
I ever seem to see.
The older flag, with its motto proud,
"You must not tread on me."

¹The motto on what was known as the "Rattlesnake Flag" used in the beginning of the Revolutionary War.

JOTUN LAND.¹

Beyond the North Star's utmost glimmer,
Where the Sun has never stretched his
hand,
Lies the home of evil spirits,
Lies the Jotun Land.

'Twas thus, by poetical fiat,
In Scandinavia old,
That the demons all were banished;
To the endless realms of cold.

Not so with poets of other lands,
Who in warmer climes had birth,
They safely ensconced their demons
In the bowels of the earth.

There far removed from all mankind,
Who ne'er shall see them more,
They domiciled their demons,
Around earth's flaming core.

"'Twas there," they said, "amid vast depths,
The gates of fire stand,
That mark the fearful entrance to
The Christian's Jotun Land."

But Jotun Land I much misdoubt,
Is not so far from home,
Nor, to view its many terrors,
Need we such distance roam.

For Jotun Land, I think, we'd find,
With all Evil's busy mart,
If we but scanned the human mind,
And searched the human heart.

¹Jotun Land: The home or place of evil spirits according to old Norse Mythology.

MY MOTHER EARTH.¹

Could I forget thee Mother Earth,
The joys and sorrows I have known,
Upon thy breast, e'en though I dwelt,
In endless bliss, beside the heavenly
throne.

The glories of thy beauteous life,
When summer days had birth,
Seemed Heaven itself in childhood's hour,
Yes, I have loved thee, Earth.

E'en in thy darker moods,
I, oft, my path would urge
Through sighing woods, or greet the storm,
From rock on ocean's verge.

Here have I laughed in mirth and joy,
And kiss of love have known,
And though the wind of Fate, my life,
To a gloomy port has blown.

O Mother Earth! though borne afar
Beyond the utmost gleaming star,
Through God's own grace, to Heaven above,
Still will I think of thee with love.

¹"Mother Earth": An expression used in ancient Greek Mythology.

THE HAPPY BUTTERFLIES ¹

How many souls ambitious

Do long for better days,

Planning the lives they'd like to lead,

In metaphorical phrase.

The eagle, child of cliff and crag,

Who soars unto the sun,

The lion, monarch of the wilds,

From the days the world begun.

Yes, lives like that they'd like to lead,

They say, with many sighs,

But what they really wish to be,

Are happy butterflies.

Give them the truncheon of command,

The orb of power, sword of sway,

The eagle's glance, the lion's roar,

They'd barter all 'fore close of day,

For chance to live in flowery ease,

Far from ambition's skies,

And float through life with souls care free

As happy butterflies.

But, when those endowed with wealth,
And the power that it brings,
Like butterflies exist and shun
The call of greater things ;

We need not grieve that they have sold
The eagle's lightning stroke,
Or that their lion roar hath ne'er
Our peaceful slumbers broke.

For the butterfly has a peaceful soul,
He'll ne'er cause much alarm,
And though he does but little good,
He'll never work much harm.

¹History is full of instances of people, who having acquired royal power, devoted their lives to various forms of pleasure.

THE OLD HERALDRY.

"How much," I said, to the gray old man,
Who kept the store of books
"How much for this old Heraldry,
'I rather like its looks."

“O that!” he said—he knew me well—

“I’ll give you free of price,

“For few there are, who, nowadays

“Would care to see it twice.”

“With its musty tales of ancient knights,

“Who were little use on earth,

“Their only fame depending on

“The accident of birth.”

Yet, in that worthless volume,

One read on each faded page

Of those strange old knights of iron,

Who ruled the Iron Age.

But few there are who realize now,

What work by them was done;

They saved the world to the Cross of Christ¹

And Europe from the Hun.²

And, ’mid its impossible lions,

And birds without any feet,³

Was many a tale of valor old

My curious eyes to greet.

There Bruce did keep the midnight ford,
Alone, 'gainst hostile hosts;
And Coeur de Lion 'gain made good,
His sanguinary boasts.

And there were knights whose single arm
Had changed a battle's strife,
And from defeat redeemed their land,
And saved a nation's life.

And yet old Feudal World you sleep,
The sleep that's free from pain,
Your life is gone and Roland's horn,
Will never sound again.

But those who have the ancient blood
Of it may well be proud;
And those who live in modern days,
May well thank God aloud.

They did not live in those old times,
When the world was made anew;
Nor have, to-day, to do the work,
That those men had to do.

¹ At the great Battle of Tours:—See Cressey's
"Decisive Battles of the World."

² At the Battle of Chalons—id.

³ Martlets: A well known heraldic emblem.

THOUGHTS FROM THE KORAN.¹

Thy lot in life seeks after thee,
And thee thy lot will find,
On earth or sea where'er thou be,
So be to God resigned.

Thy lot in life will search thee out
Through fire and flood and wind,
So stay at rest from endless quest,
And be to God resigned.

Strive as he may, no man can say,
He triumphed over Fate,
We live our lives as God decrees,
"Only God is great."

¹The Koran is the sacred book of the Mohammedans.

THE CALL TO PRAYER.

What matters the time and place,
From your memory they would fade,
A Christian youth once fell in love
With a dark eyed Moorish maid.

Where this befell, the opposing faiths
On peaceful terms did stand ;
And one might take what path he chose
To climb to Heaven's land.

But though Religion's sword be sheathed,
'Tis ne'er in sheath of love ;
Who can abate Religion's hate,
Bring home once more the dove ?

Though love untaught might rend apart,
Religion's fetters grim ;
To those who gaze through Faith's dark glass,
All other things seem dim.

"Our child and friend should ever live
According to our creed sublime ;
To wed a heretic would mean
Perdition to the end of time."

Thus urged the parents and true friends ;
On Heaven was fixed their gaze ;
And so the lovers parted then,
To wend life's separate ways.

Perhaps at times, in fancy bright
 They lived again life's morn ;
Perhaps at times, they met in dreams,
 That faded with the dawn.

For though religions pass from earth,
 As Druid Oak or Indian Car¹
Who can ignore the power of love
 Defy Astarte's star?

For when the Christian bells rang out,
 Salvation's path to show ;
A faith, whose promise should dispel
 All earthly care and woe ;

And when the Muezzin's call to prayer,
 Was heard from minaret,
And true believers all might then
 The sorrows of earth forget ;

Yes, when sound of bells, or call to prayer,
 Did through the city roll,
And dreams of joys in Paradise
 Did thrill each faithful soul ;

Who might divine the bitter thoughts
 Within two hearts that swell,
As they listened to the call to prayer,
 Or heard the Christian bell.

¹ "Indian Car": The Hindoo Car of Juggernaut.

INSECT LIFE.

The caterpillar crawls and crawls
 His weary life away,
He feeds and rests, then crawls again,
 His life through night and day.

And man, who boasts his own high sphere;
 Creation's chiefest prize;
Watches the insect crawl through life;
 Then goes and does likewise.

ODIN'S LAND.¹

Land of my fathers in days of old,
 Whose warlike breath has long been cold,
As the seas that beat upon thy shore,
 Or your northern lights that palely gleam
On many a frozen fiord and stream;
 Are your glories gone forevermore?

Though ages have past since your northern
gale

 Last filled the Vikings' parting sail
And their armour shone in Baldur's beam,²

 Though the Hammer of Thor has long
decayed,

Though Odin's shrines in dust are laid,
And Asgard³ is now but an ancient dream ;

Your realm is shrunk to your own rude shore
And your fishermen gather mid ocean's
roar,

Scant and uncertain prize of the sea ;
 While, on land, your folk with endless toil,
Wrench scanty life from stubborn soil :
 Can this be all remains to thee?

Still lives the past around thy shore ;
 Still spirits speak in tempest's roar,
And darksome ocean's flow ;
 Your northern lights do never sleep,
Still southward, with majestic sweep,
Do Hymer's cattle⁴ go.

Though your ancient glories long have fled,
And your ancient days have long been
dead;

Will you not again be born?
And a new and greater life expand,
Upon thy soil, O Odin's land!
A new and brighter morn.

¹ Scandinavia: Its inhabitants, in ancient times, worshipped several deities, among which Odin was the chief.

² The ancient Scandinavian sun deity.

³ The fabled city of the Gods according to Norse Mythology.

⁴ The icebergs were so called by the ancient Scandinavians.

THE WONDERS OF THE WORLD.¹

In reverie, the ancient world
To-day returned to me;
The temples blazed again with lights,
To my fancy soaring free,
And the old Colossus
Once more bestrode the sea.

And all those ancient wonders
 Seemed grouped before mine eyes,
Symbolic of that earthly pride
 That feign would scale the skies,
Ignoring meek humility,
 In Heaven the chiefest prize.

Where are the men that reared of old,
 Those monuments of pride?
Their race is run, their tale is told,
 A tale of ruin wide;
Their empires have declined to dust;
 Their memories e'en have died.

The moon still rides the heavens,
 But her temple's passed away;
Still stand the ancient pyramids,
 But closed is Egypt's day;
And the old Colossus fell long since,
 Of war the spoil and prey:

The beautiful gardens have vanished
 As the roses that in them bloomed ;
And even the house of the dead is gone,
 For the tomb is itself entombed ;
And thus, with many a varied fate,
 Has the pride of man been doomed.

'Twas thus my mind reviewed the past,
 As here I've put in rhyme ;
And thought, while on my ears there fell,
 Of bells the distant chime,
The labyrinth is lost forever
 In the labyrinth of time.

Jove's temple sleeps beneath the sand,
 The Pharos 'neath the sea ;
And then the message of the bells
 Came to me suddenly,
'Twas the Babe within the manger
 In distant Gallilee.

And then of human wonders,
No more I idly dreamed;
The light of Christ came from afar,
And on my soul it gleamed,
True Wonder of the World, whose Word,
From sin our race redeemed.

¹The wonders of the ancient world are generally enumerated as follows: The Temple of Diana (or the Moon) at Ephesus; the Temple of Jupiter Ammon; the Colossus of Rhodes; the Pyramids; the Hanging Gardens at Babylon; the Labyrinth at Crete; the Tomb of Mausolous, King of Caria and the Pharos or Light-house at Alexandria.

BIRDS AND BEASTS.

To-day I wandered through the Zoo,
For historical study inclined,
Of Gibbon and Macaulay I'd wearied,
And thought that I might find.

More truth in Nature's children than
In literary rations,
So sought to study at first hand
The spirits of the nations,

Whose noble forms adorn cartoons
In all our daily papers,
Redressing or committing wrongs,
With divers other capers.

Now whether I did fall asleep
And dreamed 'fore e'er I woke,
That the noble forms around me
In human cadence spoke ;

Or with comprehension of their speech
Became at once endowed,
Like Eastern sage, I know not,
But they spoke to me aloud.

And first the Eagle's voice I heard,
"I was the spirit of Rome,
And my image was borne throughout the
world,
On earth and ocean's foam."

"My people were a conquering race,
And I gave them a world's dominion,"
He looked around with haughty eyes,
And shook his dusky pinion.

Then, from an obscure corner,
 A Raven¹ croaked with glee,
As he thought of the glorious days of old,
 When he ruled both land and sea.

And he croaked of the valiant deeds
 That his people of old had wrought,
Of the nations and powers they overcame,
 Of the odds 'gainst which they fought;

And of scenes of fighting and blood,
 But sudden he ceased his croak,
And stayed his ancient tale of war,
 For stern the Lion spoke:

“The dominion,” he said, “of the birds of the
 air,
 Has long since passed to me,
Just follow the trail of the King of Beasts,
 And see what you will see.”

Then suddenly I saw that trail,
 From north to furthest South,
I saw the hapless Hindoos shot
 From the cannon's flaming mouth.

On desert sands in Africa,
The dead in thousands lay;
And then my mind reverted back
To Drogheda's dreadful day.

To fearful scenes in Scotland old,
Of blood and crime and woe,
And shrieks of murdered children in
The Valley of Glencoe.

And Tarleton's track of ruin and blood
Arose before my eyes,
And the flames of Copenhagen
Lit once again the skies.

"No more!" I cried, "No more!"
And the vision passed away;
The animals no longer spoke,
I hastened fast away;

But on my heart a shadow lay,
Though bright the day above,
In bitter mood, I cried, "O God!
How wasted is thy love."

“O when will Conquest’s dream be done,
Her sword be laid at rest,
And mindful of God’s holy word,
When shall mankind be blessed.”

When will God’s peoples turn to God,
Forget unholy aspirations,
Reject the creed of beast and bird,
Those deities of the nations.”

¹ The raven was the emblem of the ancient Vikings.

THE SHELL.¹

A thousand years you were buried and more,
A thousand miles from ocean’s shore,
Yet now I hold you in my hand,
And you talk of ocean’s land:

Whispering softly in my ear,
“Do you not the ocean hear?
List the footsteps of the tide,
The murmur of the waters wide.

In my heart I've held it long,
I will whisper you the song,
Our thoughts are kindred, you, like me,
Are an exile from the sea.

Close your eyes and list my tune;
You will see the summer moon,
With wand of silver softly guide,
The errant wanderings of the tide,

Where crescent shores of sand invite
A visit from the waters white,
And tired billows, cease to roam,
Fling down at last their flowers of foam.

Or you will see the breakers run,
In golden sparkles 'neath the sun,
There swoops the sea gull for his prize,
And the waves to meet him rise.

The ship upon the horizon's verge
Seems scarce her onward course to urge;
But yon bird flying far above the ship,
How fast the skies behind him slip.

Ah! sweeter far than any rose,
Is the breath the salt wind blows,
And what harmony can music reach,
Like sound of breakers on the beach.

O! let us go and live once more,
Where the billows woo the shore,
Where rules that glorious trinity,
The earth, the sky, the rolling sea.”

¹ Shells are frequently found buried far inland and are said to have been carried there by some deluge in early times.

OUR FLAG.

This eve I watched them lower the flag
From a public building's tower.
As is the custom through the land,
When comes the sunset hour.

But a feeling of sadness swept o'er me,
To see the flag withdrawn,
And I said, I'll wrap it round my heart,
Until the coming morn.

For all my line and race have lived,
 Beneath those colors fair,
Since first that matchless ensign,
 Was given to the air.

In darkest hours of human hope,
 When Freedom knew no light,
The constellation of her stars
 Burst forth upon the night.

The pillar of fire, at night, did not
 With greater glory gleam,
To wandering sons of Israel,
 Then did her starry beam,

Shine forth on exiles and oppressed,
 On many a foreign strand,
A beacon to new shores of hope
 A new born Promised Land.

And if you boast that good old Flag,
 As the Flag you call your own,
Ne'er turn to other idols,
 But worship that alone.

Though other flags may proudly boast
 Their birth in ancient time,
What other flag is free from blood,
 And free from conquest's crime?

Yes, emblem indeed of all we are,
 Of all we hope to be,¹
Such is the message that our Flag
 Doth send to you and me.

¹ "That flag is the emblem of all we are, of all we hope to be." From speech by Robert G. Ingersoll.

THE RACE OF LIFE.¹

Another entry for the race,
 You're a good one, that is true,
At any rate you squall as though,
 You knew a thing or two.

I wish I knew astrology
 I'd cast your horoscope,
For in your bright blue eyes I read
 A boundless wealth of hope.

As though the stars had promised you
 Their fairest influence,
To aid with all their heavenly power
 The earthly realm of sense.

But 'tis Heaven itself we must recall
 Our destinies will furnish,
And the race of life you may not win,
 But here's for you my wish:

May the weather be clear, the track be fast,
 When you shall make your essay,
And may you go through the Race of Life
 Winning all the way.

¹ Written specially for my nephew, Winthrop Stearns, 2nd, two months old.

STILL SOUNDS OUR GRACE CHURCH BELL.¹

Not as we see the soldier come,
 With noise of trumpet and of drum,
And martial music sounding clear;
 With joy instead in peaceful ways,
And hymns to God in heartfelt praise,
 To-night we gather here.

No general he, whose hand we clasp,
 With armies at his nod,
But something higher, nobler still,
 A minister of God.

Since first he came to dwell with us,
 As our Rector and our guide,
How many years have passed away
 Adown time's ebbing tide ;

Years of laughter and of tears,
 Years of hopes, ambitions, fears,
Years of joy and years of sorrow,
 Yet with faith in God above,
Have we always faced the morrow.

And he, our Rector and our guide
 Has walked with us these years,
Instilled into our hearts new hopes,
 And lightened all our fears.

He taught the word of God to those
 Who gathered in the Church above,
And lessons of the truest life,
 The life of light and love.

And in the city's changing life,
We toiled with him to save
Our Church, and breast the strife
Of adverse wind and wave.

Around the tides of unbelief,
With deepening waters swell,
But still our doors are open,
Still sounds our Grace Church bell.

The altar still is there, amid its lights,
Still stands the cross divine,
And weary souls find solace there
In the sacred bread and wine.

We feel we have not toiled in vain,
As we recount these blessings o'er,
We feel that God is with us yet,
As in the days of yore.

And though our Church is small,
And in narrow compass stands,
Its influence is wide, for many have gone hence
To dwell in other towns and lands.

As when a stone is cast
In idle waters dead,
And from its narrow start we view
Its widening circles spread,

So, from our church, its influence
Has thus gone forth afar,
To teach the truths of Christian faith,
The Message of the Star.

But these absentees, in thought, I'm sure,
To-night are with us here,
So we all will gather round,
With words of friendly cheer;
To give our Rector greeting warm,
On this, his twenty-fifth year.

¹ Written specially for the celebration held in honor of Rev. Wm. G. Ivie, upon his completing twenty-five years of service as Rector of Grace P. E. Church, Brooklyn, E. D., N. Y.

IN LIGHTER
VEIN.

ELEPHANT MOUSES.

"Let's play at elephant mice,"

Said the little boy to his cat ;

He had a large woolly elephant,

That was quite nice and fat.

"The real ones," he said, "are much too small,

"For folks like me and you,

"We must always play at doing things

"That are really worth while to do."

So kitty clawed at the elephant

To the boy's content and her own ;

But ambition is surely a dangerous thing,

And had better be left alone.

For while at elephant mice they played,

All full of amusement and joy,

A real mouse in the very next room,

Stole a cake that was left for the boy.

Alas ! how true it is in life,

We see it every day,

While we play at elephant mice

The real mice get away.

FILL UP THE FLOOR.

Did you ever go to a real dance,
In the mountains long ago,
Where happy young folks really tripped
The "light fantastic toe."

The one step walk, the gliding waltz,
Were all to them unknown,
And for an orchestra they had
A single fiddle's tone.

Yes, it surely was a "fiddle"
And not a violin,
All strongly strung for heavy work,
The notes were never thin.

And, as he scraped its strident strings,
The fiddler loud would roar,
To happy country girls and boys,
"Now, come, fill up the floor."

And, to his invitation loud,
The floor would quickly fill,
For good old "Lancers," "Firemens"
Or racketing "Quadrille."

Or, possibly, he'd laugh at us,
 'Mid tuneful music tricksy
When we lost our step and walked around
 The turns and twists of "Dixie."

O good old dances you lacked "polish,"
 But you were not a bore,
And many a time I've gladly rushed
 To help "fill up the floor."

And, though, old dances you are gone,
 Who knows what is above?
Some good old angel, with a fiddle,
 May greet us there with love.

And, as the harps suspend awhile,
 We'll hear, with joy, once more,
That good old invitation,
 "Now, come, fill up the floor."

THE OLD FERRY.

No, 'twas not a romantic spot,
 Where hills were clothed in green,
And forests that sloped down to guard
 A wild, romantic stream,

Where rustic town, or village church,
 In dying sunlight gleamed,
Or ruined feudal towers,
 Of ancient glories dreamed.

No, 'twas not at all like that,
 Nor would I wish it so,
So pleasant are its memories
 To me from long ago,

But instead, it was the Ferry,
 Amid the City's roar,
That went from noisy old New York
 Across to Brooklyn's shore.

And pleasant it was at evening hour,
 To quit old New York's roar,
And meet with charming Susie,
 And pretty Eleanore;

And sail across the Ferry,
 With happy laughter gay,
And many a pleasant joke and jest
 To cheer the homeward way.

And what cared we if the clumsy boats,
Did sometimes miss the slips,
It only served to lengthen
Our pleasant little trips.

Yes, dear old Ferry, you did give
Me, many a moment bright,
And though my life has since inclined,
Towards darkness and the night;
Whene'er the past and days now gone,
My restless thoughts review,
Though years have past since those old days,
I'll think kind thoughts of you.

THE GLOVES.

You may talk about your tournaments
Where knights of old did strive,
Or about your modern football,
But you'll never be alive,
In days of peace and quietness,
When rule the peaceful doves,
Till you have learned what fun there is
In three rounds with the gloves.

Not in the "Baboonish style,"
 Condemned by Ingersoll,
Nor yet with ultra dainty air,
 Just like a dressed-up doll;

But in the good, old clever style,
 Of Mace or Dempsey old,
No slugging, standing toe to toe,
 Till strength, at last, grows cold;

But with true boxing science,
 Akin to the fencing art,
Where dextrous parries, lightning blows,
 Have all to play their part.

The rapid maze of shifting feet,
 The left strikes from afar
Scarce quicker than the right which follows,
 With soporific jar.

Yes, it gives heart to desponding minds,
 On life a brand new lease,
And for national unrest supplies
 A safety valve for peace.

For who would wish to slay his foe,
Then raise a fiendish shout,
When, with the gloves, he easily,
Could quietly "put him out."

Yes, still above fair Europe's lands,
Would brood the peaceful doves,
If Czar and Kaiser quietly
Had just "put on the gloves."

And settled thus between themselves,
Which ruler was the best,
And then Earth might have jogged along
And had a little rest.

MY TALENTED MEXICAN GIRL.

Yes, she surely was a gifted girl,
From Mexico she came,
Could talk delightful Spanish;
Floreta was her name.
Yet English, too, she'd talk as well,
As ordinary folk,
Although, whene'er excited, she,
With German accent, spoke.

Yet, partial to "old Ireland,"
 In its colors always seen,
And her favorite song of songs
 Was "Wearing of the Green,"
I'm afraid she was a little vain,
 But she had a loving heart,
O! who can tell the grief I felt
 The day we had to part.
Now if you think I'm going to tell
 Of love, guitars and song,
A tale of Mexican romance,
 You surely will be wrong;
Of real girls I have had my share,
 Along with other folly,
She simply was my parrot green,
 My pretty little Polly.

MABEL.

To-night I sit beside the door,
 My dog beside me on the floor,
And muse upon the dripping rain,
 And days that will not come again.

Can this be "Jack" who writes these rhymes
Of pleasant memories of old times,
And life within the "Happy Vale,"
To him 'twas known as "Mountaindale."

And did the place so lovely lie?
With summer birds and flowers and sky,
And brook that flowed with softest sound,
And mountains grouped in ranges round?

And all the scenic fuss and feathers,
Including summer days and weathers,
On which all poets should love to dwell?
Alas, alas! I cannot tell.

No doubt it was of some such style,
But what boy thinks it worth his while,
To rhapsodize o'er Nature's heart,
Or wonder on her beauteous art?

This boy did not, at any rate,
But victim fell to another fate;
Else he would not pen this rhyme
Of Mabel in that olden time;

For what to him were earth or skies,
 Compared to Mabel's dark brown eyes,
Or softest sound of brooklet's fall,
 Unto her voice so musical;

And what joy in life could e'er compare,
 With strolling through the summer air
With Mabel in the Happy Vale,
 Just to get the evening mail?

Sweet Egeria¹ of a boyish dream,
 Still from the past you seem to gleam;
Like Numa's nymph you seem to me,
 Half girl and half divinity.

And if before Memory's picture plays,
 You do ever stand at gaze,
And muse on many a bygone scene,
 I hope I'm somewhere on the screen.

¹ Egeria: The beautiful spirit, half human and half divine, who, tradition says, used to appear to Numa, one of the early Roman kings.

OLD WILLIAMSBURG.¹

Can this, indeed be old Broadway?

And "Emma," "Susie," where are they?
And all the other girls I knew,
And all the jolly fellows too.

Who used to float along its ways,
In idle hours of other days,
On soda bent, or something stronger,
Alas! the street knows them no longer.

And old Bedford Avenue too,
Surely this cannot be you,
Where Grant and "Grover" oft essayed
To view our annual parade,

Lending dignity to our town
And adding to its small renown;
Which, as I remember best,
Seemed chiefly, in those days, to rest;
On churches, built in all designs,
Which seemed to stretch away in lines,
And lent an air of pious cheer
And fervor to our atmosphere.

Save when glad news came o'er the wires,
That made us all forget the spires,
In celebrating joy, we'd feel
At a victory won by the "Nonpariel,"²

And did we boys have a Fourth of July
With noise enough to rend the sky?
You bet we did, and Autumn's days,
Were brightened by our bonfires' blaze;

And we played ball with cheerful mien,
For a "cop" was seldom seen;
And if one came, he passed away,
And ne'er returned until next day.

And though we lived a life apart,
From New York's great central heart,
Yet with the world we held communion,
"As goes our ward so goes the Union,"

And "Election" this truth would verify;
And though our streets did mostly lie,
Encased in cobble stones,
Suggestive much of broken bones;

Though few our cars, and far between,
 We managed to remain serene,
And drew from life in that old town,
 In spite of Fate's occasional frown,

Much gold of pleasure and of joy,
 And happiness without alloy,
Before there came that change in scene,
 Which altered all its old time mien.
Yes, if a real life you would really live,
 To modern cities no thought give,
But go off and settle down,
 In a good old-fashioned, one horse town.

¹ Williamsburg, now a part of Brooklyn and Greater New York, formerly, and before improved transit facilities, was practically an independent community,

² "Nonpariel" Jack Dempsey, the celebrated middle-weight boxing champion, who lived in Williamsburg, was known by this appellation.

BOWERY BAY BEACH.

What though it is a common place,
 It yet is dear to me,
The grassy slopes, the curving beach,
 The sun upon the sea.

The crowds that come and crowds that go,
 Gay stir of Pleasure's forces,
The endless hurdy-gurdy's grind,
 The circling wooden horses ;
For here the flowers of Eden bloomed
 'Mid youth's surroundings gay,
Where thy dark eyes first met my own,
 Sweet Heaven of a day.

Yes, Heaven was this selfsame place
 That love could thus endow,
The same old crowds, the tuneless tunes, alas !
 The tunes are different now.

What cared we then for music's sins,
 For absent sharp or flat,
In days of "Annie Rooney"
 And "Mama, Buy Me That."

I would have sworn that day that Fate
 Would make his promise true ;
That Heaven and Earth themselves should
 part
 Ere I should part from you,

But Time and Fate, with ruthless hand,
Swept us so far apart,
That now I'd swear 'twas all a dream,
But for my telltale heart.

Strange Bastile of a soul,
That thus, for years, enthralls,
Whose binding strength was beauty's charm,
Instead of prison walls.

Still from the past you seem to shine,
Of youth the morning star;
But what's the use, I must get home,
I needs must catch my car,

And through the twilight speed along,
Where once you rode with me,
I leave the sea and sand behind,
But not the thought of thee.

Evening's shadows now are falling,

My home I reach once more,

My heart still thinks of someone

And of the days of yore.

THE PHOTOGRAPH

(An Acrostic)

My eyes gaze on the picture,

And its eyes return my gaze,

Round my heart who knows what sadness,

In the thoughts of other days,

O the joys I've known with thee!

Now this is all remains to me.

L'ENVOI.

Old friends, old days,
 I've penned your praise,
In verse of "lighter vein,"
 But serious too
Are the thoughts of you
 You'll find within my strain.

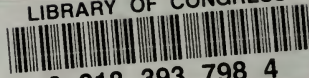
For many who read
 Do wish to feed
On joke and jest and laugh,
 They crave for fun,
And few, or none,
 Will cup of sorrow quaff.

So though I wear,
 With careless care,
The iron mask of mirth,
 I'll ne'er forget
I'm in your debt
 For happy hours on earth.





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